

Top Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

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MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

ARMY review(s) completed.

USMC review(s) completed.

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Information as 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Twenty-three Communists were killed in a four-hour battle with South Korean forces in coastal Phu Yen Province on 25 January (Para. 1). On 25 January, a South Vietnamese minesweeper hit a Communist mine and sank in the main Saigon shipping channel (Para. 2). US artillery killed 10 Communist troops just south of the DMZ in northernmost Quang Tri Province (Para. 3). Communist communicators, using captured American equipment, have been attempting to mislead US Marine pilots (Para. 4). Communist order of battle changes in South Vietnam (Paras. 5-9). A recently captured Viet Cong document reveals that the civilian and military logistics groups will be consolidated (Paras. 10-14).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Peking has canceled all regular domestic radio programs in support of Vietnam because of a decision to give highest priority to the cultural revolution (Paras. 1-2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Two companies of the South Korean 28th Regiment engaged a Communist force of unknown size early on 25 January about nine miles south of Tuy Hoa in coastal Phu Yen Province. Twenty-three enemy were killed and 27 weapons captured during a four-hour battle. South Korean casualties were light with only two reported wounded.

2. A South Vietnamese minesweeper hit a Communist mine early on 25 January and sank in the main shipping channel--the Long Tau River--linking Saigon to the South China Sea. The ship was under automatic weapons fire from Viet Cong positions on the river bank when it struck the mine, which was believed to be command-detonated. US tactical air strikes were directed against the enemy positions and several bunkers were destroyed. The American adviser aboard the minesweeper was listed as missing after the blast; all five Vietnamese crew members were wounded. The channel remains open to shipping.

3. A US Marine reconnaissance patrol of Operation PRAIRIE operating just south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in northernmost Quang Tri Province located 14 uniformed North Vietnamese soldiers on 24 January. Allied artillery fire was directed against the enemy position and ten enemy soldiers were reported killed. Since this multibattalion operation began on 3 August, 1,370 Communists have been killed compared with 224 Americans killed and 1,121 wounded.

Communist Communications Deception Against US Pilots

4. US Marine officials have reported six instances of attempted enemy communications deception against US Marine aircraft during the past week. Using captured US equipment, English-speaking enemy communicators have entered the aircraft nets in an attempt

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to misroute strike aircraft or to give generally misleading information. When these attempts have failed, the enemy has resorted to jamming by either humming into the microphone or scraping the microphone to produce noise. Alternate frequencies and simple brevity codes have been employed by the US to prevent the enemy from misleading the pilots.

Order of Battle Changes in South Vietnam

5. MACV has confirmed one additional North Vietnamese division headquarters and two new North Vietnamese Army regiments in South Vietnam--all in Phuoc Long Province. This brings NVA strength in the South to over 50,000 men. The newly confirmed headquarters is that of the 7th NVA Division, with a strength of 900 men. The 7th Division is subordinate to the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) and consists of the 141st Regiment and the newly confirmed 165th and 52nd regiments. The strength of this division is estimated to be 6,150 men.

6. The 165th Regiment, with a strength of 1,950 men, arrived in South Vietnam in June or July 1966. The mission of this unit is reported to be to safeguard storage installations in VC Military Region VI, to counter enemy sweep operations and to conduct ambush and harassment operations in Phuoc Long Province. The 165th had 2,100 men assigned while in North Vietnam. Casualties and sickness have reduced this number, however, to an accepted figure of 1,950. The regiment was last contacted by friendly forces on 14 January in Phuoc Long Province.

7. The 52nd Regiment, with a strength of 1,500 men, departed North Vietnam in April and arrived in Phuoc Long in September 1966. No information is available on the regimental mission. The last contact with an element of the 52nd Regiment occurred on 24 November in Phuoc Long Province.

8. In other order of battle developments, MACV has dropped the 1,000-man 250th Regiment from order

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of battle listings. This unit, which had been carried as subordinate to the newly confirmed 7th NVA Division, was apparently broken up to provide replacements for other main force units in the III Corps area. Seven returnees or captives and five documents have confirmed the dissolution of the 250th Regiment.

9. North Vietnamese strength in South Vietnam is now broken down into six confirmed divisions and one probable, or 21 confirmed regiments and one possible. North Vietnamese strength in confirmed, probable, and possible categories of the order of battle is now 50,860 men.

COSVN Decision to Consolidate Civilian and Military Logistics Groups

10. A document captured during Operation CEDAR FALLS has revealed that the Viet Cong intend to change the status and responsibilities of their local rear service units--military organizations previously engaged in procurement and transportation of supplies for military units.

11. According to the document--a copy of a Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) resolution adopted at a 9 October 1966 conference--rear service units at provincial levels and below will be disbanded and key cadres reassigned to newly created "military provision subsections" under the existing forward supply councils. These councils are village-, district-, and province-level civilian organizations under the control of the party which were established in mid-1965 to assist and supplement the operations of the rear service units. Their duties have included procuring supplies, particularly nonmilitary, transporting supplies to the battlefield, and recruiting and controlling civilian laborers.

12. The change is to be effected in three phases during 1967. Specific duties of the military provision subsections will include estimating combat

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needs and procuring, storing, transporting, and issuing military provisions to combat units. The subsections will also recruit and manage purchasing agents in government-controlled areas. Funds for the purchase of all materials will be obtained from COSVN.

13. Apparently rear service units will continue to operate at the regional level. The military provision subsections are to be created only up to the province level and the resolution specifies that transportation of supplies above that level will be coordinated with rear service units.

14. Since the forward supply councils were originally set up to correct deficiencies in rear service unit operations, the consolidation of the civilian and military organizations is probably a further step toward improving the efficiency of these operations. In addition, the elimination of much of the rear service units' responsibility will probably release a great many military personnel for combat.

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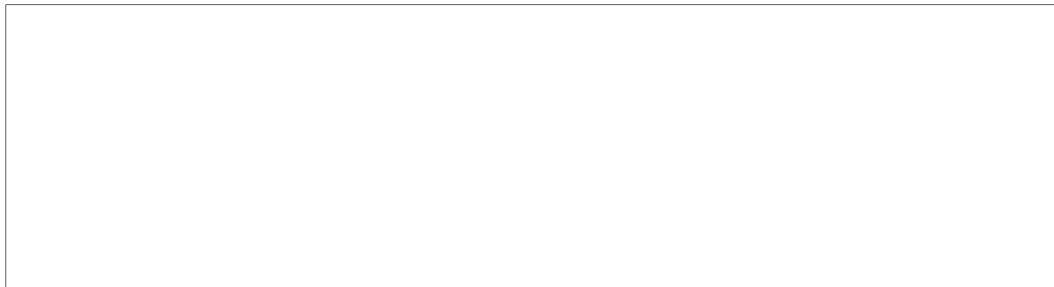
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Constituent Assembly Continues Work on Draft Constitution

5. In sessions on 23 and 24 January, the Constituent Assembly approved, with some modifications, Articles 9-14 of the draft constitution. These provisions form a part of the constitution's second chapter entitled "Basic Rights and Duties," and concern principles which relate to religion, education, communications media, and several individual rights. Among the more significant decisions made by the assembly during these sessions was to allow both lay and clerical religious groups to participate in politics. The draft prepared by the drafting subcommittee barred such activity, but this was revised by the assembly after considerable debate. Regulations on the freedom of the press were left somewhat flexible, and, according to the provision approved by the assembly, are to be prescribed more specifically by later legislation.

6. The assembly has 13 more articles to debate and approve in the constitution's second chapter before moving to the fundamental sections on the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Peking's decision to give highest priority to radio programs relating to the "cultural revolution" has resulted in the cancellation of all regularly scheduled domestic broadcasts in support of Vietnam.

2. According to Peking domestic radio on 24 January, the "Aid Vietnam and Resist US" program which has been carried three to five times weekly since May 1965 over virtually all stations in China, will be replaced by programs relating to the cultural revolution. Peking is continuing propaganda support for Vietnam on its international broadcasts, however. There is, moreover, no indication that Chinese material support for Vietnam has been reduced.

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